

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES**



**NEWS RELEASE**

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Date Issued: Friday, May 3, 2019  
Time: 3:45 pm

**Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #1**

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** The commercial salmon fishing season will open in the Copper River District for a 12-hour period from 7:00 a.m. until 7 p.m. Thursday, May 16. Waters within the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be closed during this period.

The Chinook salmon inside closure area will be defined as waters north of a line connecting the following points:

<i>Point</i>	<i>Latitude</i>	<i>Longitude</i>
Steamboat North	60° 22.87' N.	145° 33.50' W.
Steamboat South	60° 22.31' N.	145° 33.50' W.
West side Pete Dahl Entrance	60° 18.89' N.	145° 30.99' W.
West end Grass Island	60° 18.30' N.	145° 28.42' W.
East end Grass Island	60° 15.24' N.	145° 17.89' W.
West end Kokenhenik Bar	60° 15.00' N.	145° 16.20' W.
East end Kokenhenik Bar	60° 13.65' N.	145° 09.46' W.
Western tip of Softuk Bar	60° 13.68' N.	145° 05.78' W.
Coffee Creek West	60° 14.13' N.	144° 58.31' W.

The grass bank marker line is defined in 5AAC 24.350(1)(A) with the exception of this year's extension of the closure line across Little Softuk (**see bold font below**). This closure line is defined with the following points:

<i>Point</i>	<i>Latitude</i>	<i>Longitude</i>
Point Whitshed South	60° 26.49' N.	145° 52.86' W.
Alaganik Slough North	60° 24.65' N.	145° 36.70' W.
Pete Dahl East	60° 20.44' N.	145° 29.14' W.
West Kokenhenik	60° 14.88' N.	145° 10.01' W.
East "East Side"	60° 14.83' N.	145° 03.36' W.
Coffee Creek East	60° 14.19' N.	144° 58.01' W.
Charlie Mohr North	60° 15.15' N.	144° 56.43' W.
Martin River North	60° 15.29' N.	144° 52.52' W.
Strawberry Reef	60° 13.93' N.	144° 50.66' W.
<b>Little Softuk</b>	<b>60° 13.16' N.</b>	<b>144° 41.38' W.</b>

Waters north of this line, within sloughs, and in Boswell Bay within the bay (5 AAC 24.350(1)(A)) are closed to commercial and subsistence salmon fishing during all periods.

During the commercial fishing season, subsistence harvest may occur in the Copper River District concurrent in time and area with commercial fishing periods until the Copper River District is closed at the end of the season. **Additionally, waters of the Copper River District, excluding the Chinook salmon inside closure area, will open to subsistence fishing from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on all Saturdays between May 15 and October 31.** Subsistence permits may be obtained at the Cordova ADF&G office during regular business hours (Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.). **Subsistence permits are not available outside of regular office hours.**

The Miles Lake sonar camp is expected to deploy on May 6. The south bank of the Copper River at the sonar site is currently covered in shore ice. In 2018, the Copper River/Prince William Sound Marketing Association provided \$75,000, Cordova District Fishermen United \$7,000, and area processors another \$28,000 towards the purchase of an ARIS sonar system and existing sonar system upgrades for the Miles Lake field camp. This new sonar system and the upgrades will allow the department to evaluate salmon length measurements at the field camp with the ultimate goal of inseason differentiation of large Chinook salmon from smaller salmon. The Prince William Sound Science Center's Lower Copper River Sonar Station will soon be up and running near the mouth of Clear Martin River on the lower east side of the Copper River (60° 22.48' N., 144° 53.68' W.). The Copper River/Prince William Sound Marketing Association provided funding for this project.

**BERING RIVER DISTRICT:** Commercial salmon fishing in the Bering River District, west of a longitude line at 144° 28.20' W., will open for a 12-hour period from 7:00 a.m. until 7 p.m. Thursday, May 16. **Additional commercial salmon fishing opportunity in the Bering River District will be contingent on accurate/timely harvest reporting as well as inseason run strength indicators for Bering River sockeye salmon stocks.**

**PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND:** Subsistence fishing will be open on Saturdays from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., between May 15 and October 31 during the commercial fishing season in all PWS salmon fishing districts. On May 15 at 8:00 a.m., districts in PWS outside of the Chenega and the Tatitlek Subsistence Areas (5AAC 01.648), will open for subsistence salmon harvest to the gear types specified in 5AAC 24.330(a)(b)(c) until two days prior to the commercial opening of that district. These districts will reopen concurrent with commercial fishing periods until that district is closed at the end of the season. Gear is restricted to 50 fathom gillnets and 50 fathom seines as described in 5AAC 01.620(b)(3). The Tatitlek and Chenega Subsistence Areas will also open to subsistence salmon harvest on May 15 at 8:00 a.m. Legal gear types in the Tatitlek and Chenega Subsistence Areas are 150 fathom set or drift gillnets, 50 fathom seines, and dipnets in freshwater for pink salmon. Commercial fishing districts within these subsistence areas will close to subsistence harvest two days prior to the commercial opening of that district, and will reopen concurrent with commercial fishing periods until that district is closed at the end of the season. Subsistence permits may be obtained at the Cordova ADF&G office during regular business hours (Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.) . **Subsistence permits are not available outside of regular office hours.**

**Copies of the updated regulation booklet, *2019–2021 Commercial Salmon Fishing Regulations for Prince William Sound*, are available in the Cordova ADFG office.**

**ALL buyers purchasing fish in the PWS Management Area are required to complete a Processor Registration Form. Contact the Cordova office for any questions regarding registration.**

**The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 p.m. Friday, May 17.**

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web address:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound and Copper River homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery, you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/webdam/download/75366778>).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a Category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. All MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/endangered-species-conservation/endangered-threatened-and-candidate-species-alaska> for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species).

Under the ESA, “take” means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” (16U.S.C. 1532(19)); and “harass” means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NOAA at 907-586-7221